

Changes and developments to the workplace in the last 20 years



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This essay is going to analyse how the work place changed in the past twenty years and the possible implications of the changes. It is also going to discuss the trends that are likely to take place in the next twenty years. In order to answer these two main questions, I will clarify in this essay the challenges in the contemporary work place, describe the organisation in the contemporary workplace and the management process.

Schermerhorn et al. (2017, p. 29) defines management as the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the use of resources to accomplish performance goals. In essence, management is about utilising the firm's workforce to achieve the firm's goals. It is important to understand the management process first and foremost in order to understand the significance of this essay. The most elementary purpose of every manager's job is to achieve the optimum usage of all of an organisation's human and material resources in order to maximise performance (Schermerhorn et al, 2017). The management process involves planning, controlling, organising and leading. A manager must be able to set performance objectives and figure out how to achieve them (Planning). For example, an organisation that values its staff might plan to ensure staff retention. In addition, a manager must be able to measure performance and act to ensure desired results are achieved (controlling). For example, a manager would continuously monitor people involved in a project in order to gather and analyse performance and then use this information to plan constructive change and action. Furthermore, a manager must be able to arrange people, tasks and other resources in such a way that the intended result can be achieved (organising). Through organising, a manager would put a plan into action and

assign manpower to it along with other needed resources. Lastly, managers must be able to inspire people to expend as much effort as they can into the task at hand in order to achieve high performance (leading). Through leading, the manager would inspire the workers to apply more of themselves into a shared vision, encourage activities that work towards the goals and inspire others to do their best for the sake of the organisation (Schermerhorn et al, 2017).

Kenichi Ohmae, a Japanese management consultant (as cited in Schermerhorn et al, 2017), suggested that most world business are not within national boundaries anymore. An example of why this is so would be the fact that a product might not be designed, made and assembled in the same country. Thus, as a result, firms have to consider factors such as cultural differences, political climates etc. when attempting to make a decision. This breakdown of borders is known as globalisation which is defined as a worldwide interrelationship between the resource flows, product markets and business competition (Schermerhorn et al., 2017). These factors hardly needed any consideration just decades ago. Globalisation has led to a large paradigm shift regarding how a firm should be managed. As a result, a business will only excel when the leaders in the organisation can understand the relationship between their organisation and the external environment. The environment can be split into two types. The general environment and the specific environment. The general environment consists of economic conditions, sociocultural conditions, Political-legal conditions, Technological conditions and Natural environment conditions. Economic conditions encompass the current condition of the economy in terms of the inflation of

money, the current interest rates that are being charged, the level of income, the GDP, unemployment rate etc. Sociocultural conditions generally encompass the most present social values such as matters of human rights. Political-legal conditions encompass the laws and regulations that are set by the current government. Technological conditions encompass the current level of technology and whether or not the technology is available. Natural environment conditions encompass the prevalent state of nature and the natural environment (Schermerhorn et al., 2017, p. 63). The specific environment pertains more to the actual organisations, groups and people that the organisation interacts and conducts business with. All of these associates are often described as stakeholders. Examples of important stakeholders are the customers, suppliers, competitors and regulators (Schermerhorn et al., 2017, p. 65).

A collection of people working together to achieve a common purpose is called an organisation (Schermerhorn et al., 2017). It is a structure where people work together to achieve a common goal. When this social phenomenon occurs, things that are unachievable through individual effort become achievable. Schermerhorn et al. (2017) describes organisations as open systems that continuously transforms resource inputs into product outputs in the form of finished goods and/or services through interactions with their external environment. And this environment is known as the external environment. It is where an organisation would get its supply of resources in addition to its source of customers. The flow between the external environment and the internal environment of the organisation can be summed up like so. When resource is input into an organisation, a

transformation process occurs where the resources are transformed into outputs. Once the output is completed, the external environment would consume the finished product. Once consumption is complete, consumer feedback would determine the future resource inputs. The ultimate goal of an organisation is to meet and surpass customer expectations. This is because without customers who was to consume what the organisation is producing, the organisation will not be able to stay afloat. In order to achieve this consumer satisfaction, the organisation will have to ensure that their resources are used efficiently and effectively (Schermerhorn et al., 2017). Thus performance needs to be monitors in order to ascertain changes that need to be made. Normally, the efficiency and effectiveness will be measured. The effectiveness of performance is the measure of task output or the accomplishment of a goal. Efficiency of performance is a measure of the cost in terms of resource incurred when trying to accomplish a goal. It can be observed that more and more organisations are taking on more and more corporate social responsibility and embracing ethical practices. The 1990s saw a rise of standards such as ISO 14001 and SA 8000 (Visser 2010). ISO 14001 is a standard that is accepted internationally that states the requirements for an effective environmental management system (EMS) (What is ISO 14001: 2015?-environmental management systems standard 2018). SA 8000 is the leading social certification standard that certifies organisations that treat their workers fairly in any country (SA 8000 2017). In order to achieve this high effectiveness and efficiency, organisations need to embrace the concept of total quality management (TQM) which is defined as the principle of which every member of an organisation is committed to

perpetual improvement and fulfilling customer wants wholly (Schermerhorn et al., 2017).

Although the workplace has been evolving and changing since the dawn of time, only the changes in the last 20 years or so will be discussed for the sake of simplicity. There is no denying that there have been rapid advancements of technology in the last 20 years. Before the 2000s, the workplace was very different in terms of technology. The internet was yet to be invented and the computational devices that were used did not have the capabilities of the devices that we have today (Schess 2013). Due to the invention of the internet, workers now have the ability to do work outside of work hours (Schess 2013). For example, a worker will still be able to respond to work related email even at home. While the implications of this would be overall increased productivity, as the amount of time work is being done is not just limited by office hours, a few complications do arise regarding the possible exploitation of workers. Thus, new laws would have to be made so that these workers would be protected under the law and compensated for the extra work hours. In addition, to remain competitive, organisations might have to constantly adopt new technologies in their perspective industries. There will be some problems and challenges that will arise because of this. According to Top Challenges Faced by Business Adopting New Technology (n. d.), organisations will have to be able to discern between new technologies that will actually increase productivity. In addition, organisations will have to be able to implement the proper system and procedures into their production process in order to utilise its full potential. This could involve training new staff to utilise the new technology.

Furthermore, the organisation needs to be able to convince the workers to accept and utilise the new technology that is being implemented. There could be workers that are resistant to change. Organisations also have to invest resources into monitoring increases or decreases in productivity to ensure that the new technology is actually bringing benefits into the organisation.

The way that people go about their careers have also changed in the past 20 years. According to Schermerhorn et al. (2017), an organisation has three type of workers, the first kind is the core worker. These are the workers that pursue traditional career paths and generally remain employed in the same organisation for a long time. The second kind of worker are contract workers. These workers are paid on a contract basis. These workers would offer a skill of service the the employer and might work for many employers at the same time. The third kind is the casual or part time worker. These workers will be trained and will act as full-time workers only when openings are available. Adkins (2016) states that millennials, those born between 1980 and 1996, are very likely to move from job to job. Based on a Gallup report, in 2016, 21% of millennials say that they have changed occupations in 2016. This is due to the fact that millennials have lower engagement in the workplace compared to the generations before. This is becoming more apparent in the last 20 years. Thus a challenge in the contemporary work place that is faced by managers is the dilemma of how to engage these younger workers (Millennials and beyond) so that job turn over can be reduced. From another point of view, it can be said that it is also a challenge for the worker to find satisfaction at the job so that maximum engagement can be achieved. This

engagement is important because if a workforce is not engaged, the individuals of the workforce will not work effectively or efficiently. As a result, the maximum output of an organisation will not be achieved. The modern worker can be likened to a consumer of the workplace. Thus, like any consumer, they must be attracted to something before they continue to commit to it. Much like how Netflix has to keep its customers attracted to the service to keep them subscribed to it. Due to this trend, companies might have to adapt to employing more hired and fixed term workers and adapt the internal processes of the organisation to adapt to the high turnover rate so as to incur the least amount of losses. Organisations need to be prepared to constantly train new employees that will only be providing temporary services.

A prevailing trend that can be seen in organisations is that the practice of outsourcing has increased a lot over the years. According to The Ultimate List of Outsourcing Statistics (2017), the reasons an organisation will outsource would be cost cutting, solving capacity issues and to access intellectual capital. Thus, the workplace of an organisation will no longer be bound to a specific location but might be spread throughout the world. As a result, people in a workforce would have to be more sensitive to differences in cultures around the world. This represents a stark difference to the workplace of the past which mostly comprises of workers from the same demographic.

Across the board, it can be seen that more and more organisations are embracing multi-culturalism and diversity. According to (Schermerhorn et al., 2017), the term workforce diversity is used to describe the differences <https://assignbuster.com/changes-and-developments-to-the-workplace-in-the-last-20-years/>

among members that make up the work force. These differences encompass but are not limited to sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, religion, ethnicity, race, age and gender. It is considered to be unethical to discriminate on someone based on any of these criteria. For example, an organisation would be reluctant to hire older staff because of the belief that they might be less productive. In addition, a diverse work force with a wide background can yield many opportunities for gains in productivity and performance as an expansive talent pool can be tapped into. An area of diversity that has seen vast improvement over the years is gender, especially in western countries. According to Labour Force Participation (2018), in both Australia and Canada, the participation of women in the labour force is over 50%. In Canada, America and Japan, women account for more than 40% of the work force. These figures have been increasing each year.

In summary, the workplace of the future will be a connected and technological one. Organisations will shift more and more to cloud computing. The organisation of the future will be a technological one and all the members of an organisation will be required to constantly strive to take advantages in new technologies. The next generations of workers will not be bound by the constraints of having to be at a job from 9 to 5 but will instead have flexible work hours. A large emphasis will be put on a good work life balance. There will be more and more outsourcing and globalism becomes more and more prevalent. Thus, the workplace of the future will require people who are tolerant and have the ability to work with many different types of people. Organisations will shift their focus from solely making profit at all cost to becoming an ethical organisation and taking on more social

responsibility. The workplace will also be more diverse in terms of to sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, religion, ethnicity, race, age and gender and there will be diversity in all positions of an organisation. Managers will play a very integral role of ensuring cohesion in an organisation so as to ensure a productive workplace.

References:

- Schermerhorn, J, Davidson, P, Factor, A, Poole, D, Woods, P, Simon, A, McBarron, E 2017, *Management* , 6th Asia-Pacific edn, Wiley, Australia.
- Schess, N 2013, ' Then and now: how technology has changed the workplace', *Hofstra Labour and Employment Law Journal* , vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 435-438
- Adkins, A 2016, *Millennials: the job-hopping generation* , Gallup, viewed 15 November 2013, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236474/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx>.
- Visser, W 2010, ' The evolution and revolution of corporate social responsibility', *Wiley* , viewed 17 November 2017, .
- What is ISO 14001: 2015?-environmental management systems standard 2018,
- What is ISO 14001: 2015?-environmental management systems standard, *ASQ* , viewed 15 November 2013, .
- SA8000 Standard 2017, *SA8000 standard* , Social Accountability International, viewed 15 November 2018, .
- The Ultimate List of Outsourcing Statistics 2017, *The ultimate source of outsourcing statistics* , MicroSourcing, viewed 15 November 2018, .

- Top Challenges Faced By Business Adopting New Technology n. d., *Top challenges faced by businesses adopting new technology* , PNJ Technology Partners, viewed 15 November 2018, .
- Labour Force Participation 2018, *Labour Force Participation* , Catalyst, viewed 15 November 2018,< <https://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-workforce-global>> .